

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Amended) Apparatus for creating and sealing an unobstructed opening across a lower portion of a passageway covered by a sliding door movable between open and closed positions ~~and for sealing along an edge of a notch within comprising a barrier plate having a notch adapted to extend~~ ~~[[extending]] across [[a]] the lower portion of [[a]] the passageway covered by a sliding door movable between open and closed positions,~~ wherein ~~[[the]]~~ said apparatus further comprises:

a compression panel,

a carrier bracket attached to the sliding door, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel is mounted on ~~[[the]]~~ said carrier bracket to be moved with the sliding door and to be movable toward ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate and away from ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate;

a compressible gasket, adapted to be disposed between ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel and ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate to extend adjacent ~~[[the]]~~ said notch ~~[[with]]~~ when the sliding

door is in the closed position; and

an actuator, disposed adjacent ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel ~~[[with]]~~ when the sliding door is in the closed position, mounted to move between a disengaged position and an engaged position, wherein movement of ~~[[the]]~~ said actuator into ~~[[the]]~~ said engaged position ~~[[with]]~~ when the sliding door is in the closed position causes ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel to be moved in contact with ~~[[the]]~~ said actuator toward ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate, compressing ~~[[the]]~~ said compressible gasket between ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel and ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate, and wherein movement of ~~[[the]]~~ said actuator into ~~[[the]]~~ said disengaged position ~~[[with]]~~ when the sliding door is in the closed position allows movement of ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel in contact with ~~[[the]]~~ said actuator away from ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate, releasing compression of ~~[[the]]~~ said compressible gasket between ~~[[the]]~~ said compression panel and ~~[[the]]~~ said barrier plate.

2. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein

said actuator includes an elongated member extending adjacent said compression panel ~~[[with said]]~~ when the sliding door is in ~~[[said]]~~ the closed position,

said apparatus additionally includes stationary ramps disposed adjacent opposite ends of ~~[[the]]~~ said elongated

member,

said actuator moves along ~~[[the]]~~ said stationary ramps between said disengaged position and said engaged position, and

~~[[the]]~~ said stationary ramps are inclined to move said actuator toward said barrier plate in contact with said compression panel ~~[[with said]]~~ when the sliding door is in ~~[[said]]~~ the closed position as said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said actuator additionally includes:

a first pair of rollers rotatably mounted on said elongated member to roll in contact with said stationary ramps; and

a second pair of rollers rotatably mounted on said elongated member to roll in contact with said compression panel.

4. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein

said apparatus includes a first pair of spaced apart rollers mounted to rotate about stationary axes,

said compression panel includes a second pair of rotatably mounted rollers,

each of said rollers in said second pair of rollers is aligned with a roller in said first pair of rollers ~~[[with said]]~~ when the sliding door is in ~~[[said]]~~ the closed position,

said actuator includes an elongated member extending

between said first and second pairs of rollers [[with said]]
when the sliding door is in [[said]] the closed position, and

said elongated member includes a pair of ramp portions
moving between said first and second pairs of rollers [[with
said]] when the sliding door is in [[said]] the closed position
and to move said compression panel toward said barrier plate as
said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

5. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, additionally
comprising:

a latch lever adapted to be pivotally mounted adjacent
[[said]] the passageway covered by [[said]] the sliding door;

a flexible member extending between [[the]] said latch
lever and said actuator to move said actuator between said
disengaged position and said engaged position with rotation of
[[the]] said latch lever; and

an actuator spring, attached to said actuator, maintaining
tension within [[the]] said flexible member.

6. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said latch
lever includes a locking pawl [[moving]] movable into a position
preventing movement of [[said]] the sliding door from [[said]]
the closed position as said latch lever is moved to move said
actuator into said engaged position.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said

compressible gasket is attached to a surface of said compression panel adjacent said barrier plate.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said compressible gasket is attached to said barrier plate.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, additionally comprising at least one spring extending between said compression panel and said carrier bracket to move said compressible gasket away from said upstanding leg of said barrier plate.

10. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said actuator [[extends]] is adapted to extend inwardly adjacent [[said]] the sliding door, and

said apparatus additionally comprises a stationary cover extending over said actuator.

11. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said actuator includes:

a pair of arms pivotally mounted on stationary pivots;

a connecting link pivotally mounted on each of [[the]] said arms to extend between [[the]] said arms, and

a pair of rollers mounted to roll in contact with said compression panel [[with said]] when the sliding door is in [[said]] the closed position, moving said compression panel toward said barrier plate as said actuator is moved into said

engaged position.

12. (Amended) Door apparatus including:

a sliding door;

a frame mounting the sliding door to move between open and closed positions, wherein the frame includes a barrier plate having a notch forming a part of a passageway covered by the sliding door in the closed position;

a compression panel;

a carrier bracket attached to the sliding door, wherein the compression panel is mounted within the carrier bracket to be moved with the sliding door and to be movable toward the barrier plate and away from the barrier plate;

a compressible gasket disposed between the compression panel and the barrier plate to extend adjacent the notch with the sliding door in the closed position; and

an actuator, disposed adjacent the compression panel with the sliding door in the closed position, mounted to move between a disengaged position and an engaged position, wherein movement of the actuator into the engaged position with the sliding door in the closed position causes the compression panel to be moved in contact with the actuator toward the barrier plate, compressing the compressible gasket between the compression panel and the barrier plate, and wherein movement of the

actuator into the disengaged position with the sliding door in the closed position allows movement of the compression panel in contact with the actuator away from the barrier plate, releasing compression of the compressible gasket between the compression panel and the barrier plate.

13. (Original) The door apparatus of claim 12, wherein

said actuator includes an elongated member extending adjacent said compression panel with said sliding door in said closed position,

said apparatus additionally includes stationary ramps disposed adjacent opposite ends of the elongated member,

said actuator moves along the stationary ramps between said disengaged position and said engaged position, and

the stationary ramps are inclined to move said actuator toward said barrier plate in contact with said compression panel with said sliding door in said closed position as said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

14. (Amended) The door apparatus of claim 12, wherein

said apparatus includes a first pair of spaced apart rollers mounted to rotate about stationary axes,

said compression panel includes a second pair of rotatably mounted rollers,

each of said rollers in said second pair of rollers is

aligned with a roller in said first pair of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position,

said actuator includes an elongated member extending between said first and second pairs of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position, and

said elongated member includes a pair of ramp portions moving between said first and second pairs of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position to move said compression panel toward said barrier plate as said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

15. (Amended) The door apparatus of claim 12, additionally comprising:

a latch lever pivotally mounted adjacent said passageway covered by said sliding door;

a flexible member extending between the latch lever and said actuator to move said actuator between said disengaged position and said engaged position with rotation of the latch lever; and

an actuator spring, attached to said actuator, maintaining tension within the flexible member.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said latch lever includes a locking pawl moving into a position preventing movement of said sliding door from said closed position as said

latch lever is moved to move said actuator into said engaged position.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, additionally comprising at least one spring extending between said compression panel and said carrier bracket to move said compressible gasket away from said upstanding leg of said barrier plate.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said actuator extends inwardly adjacent said sliding door, and

said apparatus additionally comprises a stationary cover extending over said actuator.

19. (Original) A method for enlarging a passageway covered by a door sliding within a frame having a barrier plate extending upward to form a lower edge of the passageway, wherein the method comprises:

cutting a notch within the barrier plate along the lower edge of the passageway;

attaching a carrier bracket to the sliding door,

mounting a compression panel on the carrier bracket to be moved with the sliding door and to be movable toward the barrier plate and away from the barrier plate;

mounting a compressible gasket to be disposed between the compression panel and the barrier plate to extend adjacent the

notch with the sliding door in the closed position; and

mounting an actuator adjacent the compression panel with the sliding door in the closed position, to move along a stationary surface between a disengaged position and an engaged position, wherein movement of the actuator into the engaged position with the sliding door in the closed position causes the compression panel to be moved in contact with the actuator toward the barrier plate, compressing the compressible gasket between the compression panel and the barrier plate, and wherein movement of the actuator into the disengaged position with the sliding door in the closed position allows movement of the compression panel in contact with the actuator away from the barrier plate, releasing compression of the compressible gasket between the compression panel and the barrier plate.

20. (Amended) The method of claim 19, wherein

said actuator includes an elongated member extending adjacent said compression panel with said sliding door in said closed position, and

mounting said actuator to move along a stationary surface includes attaching a pair of stationary ramps adjacent opposite ends of the elongated member so that the stationary ramps are inclined to move said actuator toward said barrier plate in contact with said compression panel with said sliding door in

said closed position as said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

21. (Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein

said apparatus includes a first pair of spaced apart rollers mounted to rotate about stationary axes,

said compression panel includes a second pair of rotatably mounted rollers,

each of said rollers in said second pair of rollers is aligned with a roller in said first pair of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position,

said actuator includes an elongated member extending between said first and second pairs of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position, and

said elongated member includes a pair of ramp portions moving between said first and second pairs of rollers with said sliding door in said closed position to move said compression panel toward said barrier plate as said actuator is moved into said engaged position.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, additionally comprising:

pivotally mounting a latch lever adjacent said passageway covered by said sliding door;

attaching a flexible member to extend between the latch lever and said actuator to move said actuator between said

disengaged position and said engaged position with rotation of the latch lever; and

attaching an actuator spring to extend between a stationary surface and said actuator to maintain tension within the flexible member.